I Can Write Like That!

Using Children's Literature to Teach Writing

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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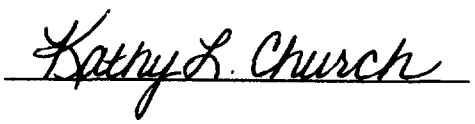

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Abstract:

This project is an investigation of integrating reading and writing instruction.. First, a philosophical and theoretical background for this method is established. It begins with the inherent connections between reading and writing, and continues to examine the benefits that utilizing this relationship can bring. A new model for literacy, called the "Readers Become Writers Cycle" is explained and supported with research. Next, is a description and explanation of the 6+1 Writing Traits Program developed by the NWREL. This program serves as the basic curriculum for the following section, a collection of lesson plans designed to teach each of the traits. Each lesson utilizes quality children's literature to model, inspire, and support students to achieve success and appreciation of writing. Then, the issue of accountability is addressed by connecting these lessons to the Indiana state standards. Finally, a reflective piece reveals general conclusions drawn from the research and field experience.

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Introduction

Personal Rationale for the Project

As a child, I loved to read. My appreciation for literature has only grown with age. Now, as an educator, I realize that power that literature possesses as a teaching tool. Even the youngest children can be enveloped in great poems and stories. I had the opportunity experience the great benefits of sharing authentic literature with students in one of my college courses. It began when I was selecting electives, an Honors Colloquium called "Poetry Goes to School" immediately caught my eye. Using the method proposed by Kenneth Koch's *Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?,* we designed lessons using authentic poems from real poets.

On my first day in the fourth grade classroom, I chose to share "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" by Emily Dickinson. As I read the poem aloud, I watched my students very carefully, unsure of what reaction I might get. "Who is the narrow fellow?" I asked my class. "Does the poet ever tell us who or what he is?" The class eagerly shared their interpretations and questions about the poem. When we read the poem again, students looked for clues that would help us identify the narrow fellow. This time, hands shot up before I even finished reading! Every student had something to say. After discussing and sharing, students were eager to read the poem again, visualizing the narrow snake.

After the final reading of the poem, one student's hand lifted with obvious excitement, "Miss Smith, can I write my own poem like that?" At that moment, I knew the power that literature holds. We brainstormed lists and lists of ideas for writing. The

class was bursting with ideas and impatient to begin writing. As I watched those students at work, I saw a group of young authors with motivation, vision, and confidence in their writing. They were all eager to share their work with their peers. As the first student began reading his poem, my jaw almost dropped to the floor. I could not believe the outstanding poetry he had written in such a short period of time!

Slithery Young Fellow
That slithery little fellow
slipping through the water.
Slick and dangerous he can be,
he'll shock you with electricity.

600 volts to be exact.
If you see one, you better backtrack.
If you don't, he'll think you're dinner,
and then it's game over,
he's the winner.

If I were you, I'd stay away.
In the river, he's there to stay.

After listening to the class read their poems, I knew right then and there that I was onto something big. This instructional strategy was working! I couldn't wait to try the next lesson!

The following week, we read "This is Just to Say" by William Carlos Williams. Students were immediately amused by the poem as the author makes an insincere apology. After discussing the poem, students were eager to share situations from their own experience in which their apology was not genuine. One student shouted out, "I can write like that! There are lots of things I'm not sorry for!" With a laugh, we all started writing poems about our own experiences. Again, the students produced quality poetry. I could tell that using literature was really helping to inspire children's writing!

As my successes with Poetry Goes to School continued, my faith in this method grew stronger and stronger. I continued teaching for various practicum courses, but only had one opportunity to teach poetry lessons again. That's when I decided to try something new. If this method of connecting literature and writing worked so well with poetry, why couldn't it work for all writing? With that brief moment of insight and curiosity, my honors thesis was underway. I decided to explore this connection between literature and writing. I wanted all of my students to enjoy and succeed at writing. I hoped that all of my students would say, "I can write like that!"

Philosophical & Theoretical Foundation

The Reading/Writing Connection

In order to improve writing, this method utilizes the fundamental connection between reading and writing. As main components of literacy and language arts, reading and writing are ways to use language in order to communicate thoughts. In fact, communication is the common thread for all elements of language arts. As one of the most essential, functional skills, communication is taught and learned at even the youngest stages of life. Vygotsky explains that children acquire language skills from imitating models around them. Language is most successfully taught in an authentic, real-world setting, which establishes communication and the real purpose (Tompkins, 1998). Reading and writing are very similar to speaking and listening. First, they are reciprocal processes that allow students to understand the world around them (Fletcher, 1993). Reading and writing facilitate the sharing of knowledge.

Another key connection between reading and writing is the shared skills needed for success in both. Students must understand the structure of writing, syntax, word meanings, and the social context. These common skills are one reason that "reading and writing abilities tend to develop concurrently, rather than sequentially" (Nelson & Calfee, 1998, p. 27). The two are fundamentally linked, even in assessment. It is common practice for students to write a summary to demonstrate ability in reading comprehension. Likewise, students might need to read a selection to write the topic sentence. Nelson and Calfee (1998) explain that reading and writing assessment are

connected because "a measure of one is often used as an index of proficiency in the other" (p. 1).

Historically, reading and writing have been disconnected, taught separately as unrelated subjects. It seems that some teachers believed this separation of instruction allowed them to focus completely on one skill at a time (Nelson & Calfee, 1998). Today, recent emphasis has been placed on the connection between reading and writing. Many teachers have discovered innumerable benefits to the integration of literacy instruction. Leading researchers and educators have spoken out to support the integration of reading and writing instruction in order to fully illustrate its importance, benefits, and practicality. Consequently, I chose to connect reading and writing in my lessons in order to maximize the potential for literacy learning.

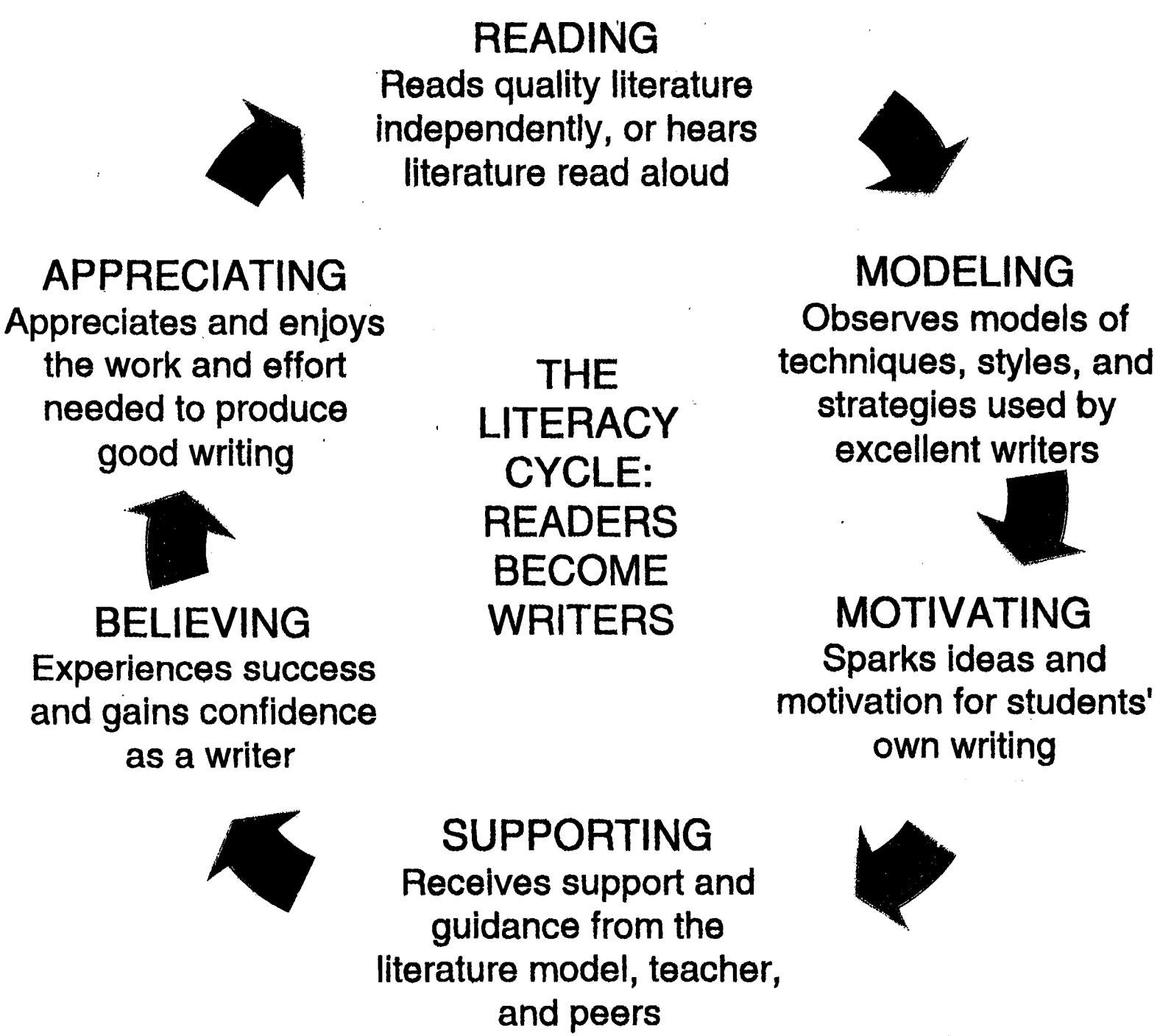
"READERS BECOME WRITERS" CYCLE

Development of the Model

Throughout my teaching and observation of reading and writing instruction, I noticed a similar pattern occurring. When using reading as a beginning for writing instruction, students seemed to pass through the same basic stages. (A model of this cycle is provided on the following page). It begins with reading quality literature, which exposes children to models of effective techniques and strategies. These outstanding examples spark motivation to write. At this point, students need assistance and support which allows them to achieve success. After completing their own writing, students can better appreciate literature, making it more likely that they will read a variety of literature at school and on their own. This is the cycle through which readers become writers, then reassume their role as readers. With integrated literacy instruction, students can feel competent in their roles as readers and writers, as they pass through this cycle.

Research Base Supporting the "Readers Become Writers" Cycle

This cycle was created after a reflection and analysis of my observation and participation in the field. Although this application is what prompted the development of the model, it also has a strong theoretical foundation. In order to demonstrate the solid research base underlying the "Readers Become Writers Cycle", I have written an explanation of each step.


READING
Reads quality literature independently, or hears literature read aloud
MODELING
Observes models of techniques, styles, and strategies used by excellent writers
MOTIVATING
Sparks ideas and motivation for students' own writing
SUPPORTING
Receives support and guidance from the literature model, teacher, and peers
BELIEVING
Experiences success and gains confidence as a writer
APPRECIATING
Appreciates and enjoys the work and effort needed to produce good writing
THE LITERACY CYCLE: READERS BECOME WRITERS

READING: Sharing quality literature

There are various ways to share literature with students. Often, students enjoy reading books themselves. Although independent reading is one way to do this, there are also several other strategies that give students the opportunity to read. One option is for students to read in pairs, sometimes called "buddy reading." Another method is guided reading, which allows the teacher to guide and support students as they read in small groups. Finally, students could participate in shared reading, an approach in which the teacher reads aloud while students follow along using a big book or individual copies. All of these strategies allow the student to physically interact with the text, which can have many benefits (Tompkins, 1998).

However, in some cases, it is most appropriate and beneficial for students to experience literature as a read aloud. It is important to realize that reading aloud is one of the most beneficial strategies for promoting literacy development. When skilled adults read aloud to students, they are able to model skills and strategies used by good readers and can demonstrate a true appreciation for literature (Tompkins, 1998). Another positive aspect of listening to literature aloud is that it removes the decoding obstacles that often create reading problems. This allows students to concentrate on their real role as readers: to comprehend the author's message. Frank May (1998) summarized some advantages of reading aloud by saying, "In a 'teacher read-aloud' environment, children can construct new meanings, learn from errors without fear, become passionately interested and involved, and connect new knowledge to old" (p. 215). The shared experience that reading aloud provides is often the most positive and enjoyable reading

activity for all students. For these reasons, my lessons were designed to use reading aloud as the primary means for sharing literature with children.

MODELING: Literature as a Model for Writing

Although many educators and theorists recognize the benefits of reading aloud, some may not understand how read alouds facilitate learning. As works by skilled authors, literature serves as a model of effective writing. Across the curriculum, modeling is one of the most versatile and effective pedagogical strategies.

Social learning theorists like Albert Bandura believe that children learn by observing and imitating the behavior of others. Especially in areas like social behaviors and communication skills, observation serves as a crucial tool for learning. Bandura explains that "significant learning occurs, often completely without error, through the act of watching and imitating another person, a model" (Bukatko & Daehler, 1998, p. 12). In fact, he also stresses the importance of observation in learning complex skills such as language. As forms of communication, reading and writing are two processes that could be learned effectively from modeling.

Vygotsky is another theorist who studied the acquisition of language skills. Sager (1990) effectively summarizes Vygotsky's view of language learning when she explains "children learn language and ways to use language in a social context from a model. . ." (p. 41). From the earliest stages of language development, children learn from those around them. We learn to talk by listening to proficient speakers and attempting to imitate what we hear. Likewise, we learn to write by reading. As we read examples of outstanding

literature, we can observe numerous styles, techniques, skills, structures, and genres for writing as they are utilized by excellent writers. In From his field research, Burton (1989) discovered that his students often "borrowed and improvised" (p. 102) on the literary models which they were reading.

Knowing that reading is an effective model for writing, teachers must strive to maximize the potential benefits. One fundamental strategy for improving writing is to surround children with examples of good writing. Teachers and parents alike, should provide rich, varied collections of distinguished literature. Fletcher's metaphorical explanation (1993) details this idea effectively "We need to marinate students in literature so that, over time, it soaks into their consciousness and, eventually, into their writing" (p. 9). Teachers should choose literature that contains models of exciting, flavorful literary elements and devices. As Glasser (1990) explains, "Reading influences writing as assuredly as diet influences health" (p. 22). For this reason, teachers must strive to feed their students a well-balanced (many genres), nutrient-rich (full of writing styles, devices, and literary elements), flavorful (enjoyable) diet of literature.

MOTIVATING: Sparking a Desire to Write

With a wide variety of literature in their reading diets, children will have a healthy appetite for reading and writing. Like Fletcher describes, the first step is for students to absorb quality writing into their consciousness. As this happens, students become aware of the power of effective writing. They begin to relish the wonderful experiences and emotions that writing can evoke. In some stories, students enjoy the suspense that keeps

them quickly turning each page. In other stories, they like to laugh at an author's funny joke and a character's amusing antics. Literature allows us to close our eyes and picture the perfect, beautiful scene, or to feel the chill down our spines when we sense that danger is near. These are all feelings that are communicated to the reader through the author's carefully chosen words. When students feel the impact of such skillful writing, they begin to understand and desire the power of an author. They, too, want the opportunity to move an entire audience to laugh or cry. When exemplary literature permeates a reader's consciousness, it awakens the aspiring writer within.

Burton's field research examining the relationship between literature and writing showed this process in action. After reading Dahl's *The BFG*, one student became particularly infatuated with his use of humorous nonsense words. Because of her delight in Dahl's technique, she found a way to "weave this joy into her story" (Burton, 1989, p. 113). This student demonstrates that an appreciation of a literary device can motivate students to utilize this strategy in their own writing.

In fact, students, as readers, pay careful attention to the specific words, styles, and literary techniques that authors use. All of these elements help us to receive the author's intended ideas, thoughts, and messages. After this successful transfer of information occurs, students understand writing as a method of communication. This gives writing real purpose and students begin to view writing as an authentic, meaningful skill that we all must possess.

When examining the motivation behind an author's decision to write, it is important to include input from professional writers. Although poets write for many

different reasons, "Almost all poets credit the legacy of other poets who preceded them. . ." (Comstock, 1992, p. 261). The authors chronicled in Lloyd's *How Writers Write* expressed that their desire to write came from a love and appreciation of reading, as well as a desire to communicate and express their ideas. Author Beverly Cleary explained, "I write because reading meant so much to me when I was growing up, as it still does. I love reading, so naturally I like to write" (Lloyd, 1987, p. 137). Many people don't realize the true impact that quality literature and experienced authors have on students' desire to write. The "Readers Becoming Writers Model" shows how enjoyable reading can create motivation to write.

SUPPORTING: Scaffolding in the Writing Zone of Proximal Development

Because children are often motivated to write like their favorite authors, they are often willing to learn and work on it. Many students hope to produce quality writing, but often don't know how. This is when teachers have a genuine opportunity to step in and provide assistance. Some techniques are rather complex and will require quite a bit of instruction and guidance, while others are easier to accomplish independently. For this reason, it is necessary to take a flexible, individualized approach to guiding students' writing.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development provides a theoretical basis for this type of instruction. Vygotsky believed that scaffolding provides an excellent opportunity for learning from another person. A scaffold is defined as "a temporary structure that gives the support necessary to accomplish a task" (Bukatko &

Daehler, 1998, p. 282). Often this support is provided by the teacher, another adult, or an accomplished peer. With writing, scaffolding can be used as the model demonstrates skills with which the student still needs assistance and motivates students to learn them. As the student improves, the "expert" withdraws assistance gradually until the student can perform the task on his/her own. This range of ability between what the child can accomplish on his own and what he can do with assistance is known as the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky believed that instruction is most effective when it is just beyond the child's current capabilities (Bukatko & Daehler, 1998).

Therefore, teachers should plan instruction around students' emerging abilities and interests. Students need the opportunity to independently practice what they know, while receiving sufficient support to try new skills. Linking literature and writing instruction is one way to guide students in the application of these new skills. With carefully chosen literature, teachers can set the stage for purposeful writing activities that follow.

One popular technique for writing activities is to write text innovations. These stories allow students to write a story that follows the basic framework of the literature model. By using a common structure, character, or plot, students do not feel so overwhelmed by the writing process. When students only need to focus on one important part of writing, the task is much more manageable. This allows students to produce high-quality writing and feel successful. As students gain confidence, teachers can lessen the support and give more freedom and responsibility to individual writers. Through the use of scaffolding, students can gradually assume the responsibilities of writing. By receiving

the necessary guidance and support, students are able to have multiple successful writing experiences.

BELIEVING: Gaining Confidence as Writers

When students know that they have the potential to accomplish a task, they are more likely to continue working toward it. With complex skills such as writing, it is crucial that students experience success early on so that they will feel capable of improving as a writer. When students are successful, they gain confidence and begin to believe in their writing abilities.

As a form of communication, writing involves an interaction between writer and reader. To make a connection with their audience, writers must be willing to share a part of themselves. This can be very difficult to do without much confidence or belief in oneself. However, after a few successful writing attempts, the determination of an aspiring writer grows, giving students the courage to try new things and continue to grow as a writer. Nurturing this attitude of competence and self-confidence is like giving the children "wings" so they can soar into a world of wonderful writing (Fletcher, 1993).

APPRECIATING: Respecting the Craft of Writing

After laboring over their own writing , students begin to understand the work and effort necessary to produce good writing. They now know that writing is a process that involves many different stages. Once students plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish their own piece of writing, they can truly understand the amount of work that writing requires.

As if the process itself weren't enough, students also use traits to identify features of effective composition. Seeking to develop original ideas, voice, word choice, and correct conventions into a fluent, organized presentation is enough to exhaust any writer. Once they realize that it is no easy task, students can finally feel a mutual respect for others that dedicate their time, thoughts, ideas, and effort to communicating effectively through writing.

The 6+1 Traits as a Writing Program

Perspective: Writing as an Extension of Thinking

Writing is one means of expressing our thoughts, sharing ideas, and communicating information. Therefore, to produce quality writing, it must stem from clear, logical thought. There are several aspects of writing that can demonstrate clarity of thought. First, writers must share insights about original *ideas*. They must present this content in an *organized* structure that facilitates the true *voice*, revealing the writer's unique style and personality. Special consideration must be given to the *choice of words* so the reader can *fluently* read and understand each sentence. Finally, the writer must follow proper writing *conventions* and choose an appropriate *presentation* of the final piece. All of these crucial elements are outlined in the 6+1 writing traits program, a program developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The NWREL's (1999) publication "The Original Student-Friendly Guide to Writing with Traits" and *Seeing Through New Eyes* provided the information from which I wrote the following explanation. From my research, I see that their philosophy of writing is designed to guide student authors to think and write clearly.

Rationale: Why Did I Choose the 6+1 Program?

After utilizing the 6+1 curriculum for writing instruction in fourth and fifth grade, I decided to make it the basis of my lessons designed for this project. For 16 weeks, I taught a multiage class of fourth and fifth grade students in a corporation that utilizes the

6+1 traits to teach writing. During that semester, I was able to get acquainted with the writing traits and see the advantages of incorporating them into a writing program. After successful experiences in intermediate grades, I was eager to transfer the program to a primary classroom. My second portion of my student teaching required 8 weeks teaching kindergarten in the same school corporation. Therefore, the same writing program was used. Because this project is being developed during my student teaching, I felt it only appropriate to link these two significant educational opportunities, giving me the perfect opportunity to teach my lessons in a real classroom. As a result, several of the lessons I designed were actually piloted in the field. I have provided a response for most of these lessons, allowing readers to see my opinions after teaching them. Because I was there for such a short time period, I was unable to pilot all my lessons. Consequently, some traits will be without a piloted lesson and response, containing only suggested ideas.

An Explanation of Each 6+1 Writing Trait

Ideas and Content

An author's purpose is to communicate a message to the reader. This message, what the writer has to say, and the reason for writing consists of specific ideas and content. Writing that demonstrates well-developed ideas and content gives focused, clear, and specific details that give the reader insight about the topic. These details are interesting and effectively reveal the author's main points.

There are several strategies for writing excellent content. First, writers should choose topics that are important to them or connect to their personal experiences. In

order to provide insightful details about the topic, students should choose a narrow, smaller topic for writing. This allows writers to illuminate their ideas with vivid, lucid details and ideas. Strong ideas and contents is the starting point for producing excellent writing.

Organization

After deciding on the content and purpose for writing, an author must choose an organizational structure that best suits his/her purpose. Organization gives direction and structure to a piece of writing. It begins with the use of a strong lead to capture the reader's attention and entice them to continue reading. Next, it is crucial for the author to proceed in a logical order that facilitates the reader's clear understanding of main points.

There are many organizational structures that help writers clearly illustrate their points. To choose the most appropriate one, authors must carefully consider the purpose and overall goal for writing. If communicating a story about a personal experience, it would make the most sense to follow a chronological structure. However, if the purpose is to explain about the state of Indiana, a conceptual model might communicate important ideas more clearly. Throughout any structure, an author must carefully fit all the pieces and ideas together to create a well-supported main idea.

Voice

Every writer has a purpose for writing. As the author reveals this purpose to his/her reader, it also reveals things about the author. Writers have the opportunity to use

their own style and flavor in their writing. The unique personality and view of every writer is one of the things that makes writing so exciting. Two authors may write about the exact same events, yet provide very distinct insights and reactions to these events.

A unique, distinctive voice can really help the reader to understand an author's message. A strong voice is one that is courageous and honest. Authors must remember to express genuine thoughts and feelings, which requires a deep self-awareness and confidence. Writers should show their knowledge and appreciation for their content. This fascination and enthusiasm evokes the same reactions in readers. When writers consider their readers as they write, they often evoke responses of honesty and sincerity.

Word Choice

Writers are much like artists. Their canvas is an empty page. Their medium is words. As carefully as painters select the perfect blend of colors, writers carefully choose the ideal collection of words. Choosing the write word is essential to good writing because it allows writers to communicate exactly what they want to say. There is a power in using the right word that helps writers paint masterpieces in their reader's mind.

With endless possibilities, it is difficult to know where to even begin. Writers that choose the right words utilize a rich vocabulary of precise, vivid words. They choose exciting action verbs that propel the action forward with stunning energy and power. They utilize specific words and phrases that paint a colorful, vibrant image in the reader's mind. Choosing the write word means using a natural, but striking vocabulary that communicates a crystal clear picture to the reader.

Sentence Fluency

With the write words and phrases, writers can create a piece that flows a swift, powerful course. When read aloud, this fluency is apparent in the natural rhythm of the language. The flow of writing begins when writers devote time and effort to revising their sentences so that their message "sounds better." They carefully choose a pace and rhythm that suits the mood and content.

To create a connected flow in writing, authors pay attention to each and every sentence. They know that every word in a sentence is important and they make every word count. Choosing powerful words allow them to eliminate unnecessary words that often confuse the reader. A fluent writer varies the structure and beginning of sentences to keep ideas fresh and flowing. Reading work aloud is the best way to assess and perfect the rhythm and flow of the writing.

Conventions

Like everything else in life, writing has its own set of rules and guidelines. Conventions are the "rules of language." By using correct spelling, punctuation, grammar/usage, paragraphing, and capitalization, authors make their writing more easily understood. Correct conventions facilitate easy reading, allowing readers to focus fully on the author's successful accomplishments of the other 5 traits.

Unlike the other traits, editing is a more mechanical aspect of writing. Authors must reread their writing in search of errors that need to be corrected. This is the only trait that actually has a "right or wrong answer." To utilize correct conventions and

follow rules of the written language, authors must reread their own work several times. It is often helpful to have someone else check your work for errors, as sometimes we overlook mistakes in our own writing. Learning the rules and guidelines for writing takes time and practice, even for the best writers. It is important to remember that conventions is one aspect of good writing that must be complemented with quality ideas, organization, voice, word choice and sentence fluency.

Presentation

Although all readers have been told not to judge a book by its cover, it is very difficult to do. Despite all the efforts of writings and parents everywhere, children and adults alike are still affected by the visual presentation of a piece of writing. For this reason, presentation becomes one of the most crucial aspects of any writing. No one will ever know how great an author's work really is unless someone picks it up and reads it.

Effective presentation of writing is inviting and appealing to the reader. The presentation of the writing on the page is a crucial element to every reader. This means handwriting must be neat and legible, which often prompts the use of word processing. In some cases, visual cues would really enhance to the reader's overall understanding of the ideas. These visuals might include pictures, charts, or graphs that visually demonstrate important points to the reader. Organizational features such as bullets, headings, and page numbers can also be extremely helpful to the reader. Overall presentation makes the reader want to read it.

Integrating the 6+1 Writing Traits into the Writing Process

Given the foundational basis for the 6+1 writing program, the focus is now directed to the implementation of the program. Many educators and students are familiar with the commonly-used 5-step writing process (e.g. prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing). This process is still the main focus of the writing program, and is now used in conjunction with the traits. Spandel (2001) explains that "Writing traits simply provide a language to strengthen the process foundation and give students possibilities for revision" (p. 132). In her model, Spandel places the first 5 traits under the revising step in the process. Although I agree with the emphasis on the writing process, I feel the writing traits can be better integrated throughout the writing process.

The following is a guide for implementing the 6+1 writing traits into the writing process. This shows that 6+1 does not necessitate a complete reinvention of the writing program. In fact, the focus of writing should still remain on the process itself. Instead, this program provides extra guidance and instruction within the framework of the already existing model for writing instruction. This guide explains the activities occurring in each stage and how they support instruction and guidance for a 6+1 trait.

Teaching Traits Within Stages Model

Stage 1: Prewriting

- **Ideas and Content-** During discussion, students should brainstorm numerous ideas about which to write. When they begin the prewriting process on their own,

they must first select a topic. Then, the student must generate main ideas and details to include in their writing.

- **Organization-** As they brainstorm, students can also begin the process of organizing their writing. They may choose to organize their ideas using a web. This would allow them to group related concepts and will begin to outline their paragraphs and writing structure. For fictional writing, it might be helpful to create a plot chart, which would provide a visual structure.

Stage 2: Drafting

- **Voice** - Using notes and outline from prewriting, students should first get all their thoughts down on paper. As they write, they should include details that show the reader the purpose for writing as important details are revealed. Writers are able to reveal their personalities through their own unique style and individual power. Encourage students to make their writing their own, so it reveals a confidence and sincerity that makes their writing distinct from others.

Stage 3: Revising

- **Word Choice** - Students should look for overused words, utilize powerful action verbs and strong descriptive words. They should attempt to incorporate figurative language such as similes, metaphors, personification, onomatopoeia, etc.

- **Sentence Fluency** - During the revising process, students should read their work aloud. This allows them to focus on the rhythm and flow of the language. Working with peers can help students to choose just the write phrases, transitions, and styles that effectively move the piece of writing.

Stage 4: Editing

- **Conventions** - To make the reader's job easier, writers should use proper conventions. This includes correct grammar and usage, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. It is often helpful to have students self-edit, peer edit, and then consult for a teacher edit. This should be considered a separate stage from editing, and be the final thing before publishing.

Stage 5: Publishing

- **Presentation** - During the final stages of any writing project, students must choose a form of presentation. There are endless possibilities! From the basic handwritten work on lined paper, to the most elaborate book with pictures and text, the style of presentation must be appropriate for the author's purpose. Students can consider utilizing class books, individual books, word processing programs, power point slide shows, and countless other styles of presentation.

Applied Activities and Lessons

Applied Activities: A Collection of Lessons

General Description of Literature Lessons

The following lessons demonstrate how these pedagogical approaches are applied in the classroom. Because this is a new program, both teachers and students are still relatively unfamiliar with the traits. Therefore, the schools chose to focus on one trait each month until students have been introduced to all of the traits. For this reason, I designed each of the lessons to emphasize the development of one specific trait. Although this separated approach to teaching the traits is appropriate while initially implementing this program, it not the most effective way to teach it. Ideally, students would learn about these aspects of good writing in an integrated fashion, realizing how effective word choice can create fluency and reveal a strong voice.

Therefore, the lessons included are in no way limited to the instruction of just one trait. By changing the focus or adding discussion and modeling, these lessons can be adapted to fit any of the traits. When students go through all 5 stages in the writing process, they automatically have the opportunity to incorporate all traits, as shown in the earlier model, "Teaching Traits Within Stages Model."

The lessons I developed are designed for primary students (kindergarten through third grade,) and are organized according to trait. Several of the lessons were piloted in a kindergarten classroom. All piloted lessons are designated by an asterisk after the book title, and are followed by samples of student work and my response. As mentioned

before, not all traits will have a lesson that has been taught in a real classroom setting. However, there are several suggested activities and ideas for each of the traits.

All the lesson plans included in this collected are organized in the same basic format. Each lesson contains four basic parts: prereading, reading, prewriting, writing. This model is outlined by Jane Glasser's "Reading to Write" model (1990, p. 23). Below, is a brief description and suggested general activities that could occur in each step.

6+1 Application Activities
Lesson Plan Format

Prereading: Tell students what to look for as they read. Teachers do this by:

- Asking questions
- Making predictions
- Discussing interesting vocabulary
- Providing a shared experience
- Connect story to students' own lives

Reading: Read the literature aloud with enthusiasm. Consider:

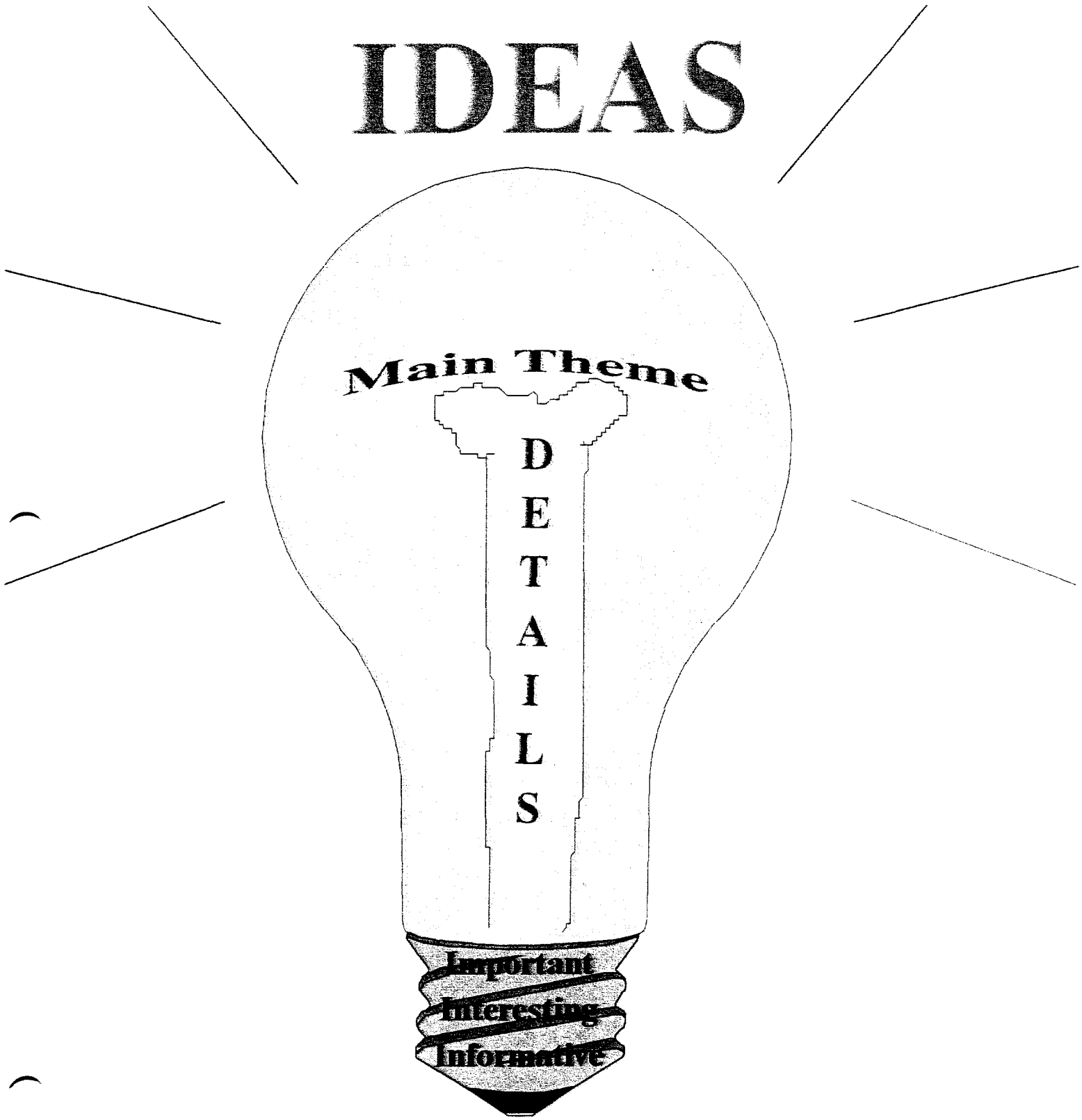
- Reading it more than once
- Stopping to revise predictions
- Emphasizing effective writing techniques
- Prompting students to read along

Prewriting: Discuss the literature and brainstorm ideas for writing by:

- Pointing out examples of effective writing strategies
- Relating the literature to personal experiences
- Generating many possible ideas for writing
- Sharing reactions to literature
- Demonstrating an enthusiasm and excitement to write

Writing: Help students to create original pieces of writing. Pedagogical strategies include:

- Modeling the writing process for students
- Scaffolding and supporting student progress
- Encouraging the use of new strategies, styles, and techniques
- Allowing students to share completed work


IDEAS
Main Theme
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Important
Interesting
Informative
CLEAR THINKING

6+1 Writing Trait: Ideas

Imogene's Antlers *

by David Small

Prereading:

"What are antlers? Who has antlers? Look at the cover. In the picture, we see a girl with antlers coming from her head. Do you think that is normal? Do we usually have antlers on our body?"

Reading:

During reading, make and revise predictions. Encourage students to look at the pictures. Model how to connect literature to the reader's own life when reading. Share a personal comment about the mother who is constantly fainting. Explain that my mother worries about me so much all the time, too. Ask students if their mom worries about them. (Especially prompt them to look carefully on the second to last page. It gives a clue about what happens at the conclusion of the story.)

Prewriting:

After reading, discuss Imogene's attitude towards her new antlers. "Does she like them? Is she the one trying to get rid of them? What things does she do with her new antlers? What would you do if you had antlers?" Then brainstorm other possible uses for antlers and demonstrate that there are many ideas for using antlers. "Why do you think the author chose these ideas?" Discuss the importance of including original, detailed ideas in writing.

Next, ask students to discuss the ending of story. Use the following questions: What do you think might happen the next day when Imogene wakes up? The next day? What other animal parts might Imogene acquire over night?" Brainstorm a list of special attributes of various animals. Possible suggestions are: wings, fins, camouflage, tail, peacock feathers, horns, claws, stripes. Then ask students what they would do if they had these attributes. The teacher can then model the writing activity by sharing various things to do with wings. This example provides several possibilities.

> Miss Smith's Wings
> If I had wings, I would fly to wonderful places all around the world.
> First, I would fly to Florida to visit my grandma.
> I would fly to the top of the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
> I would eat lunch on top of the Statue of Liberty.

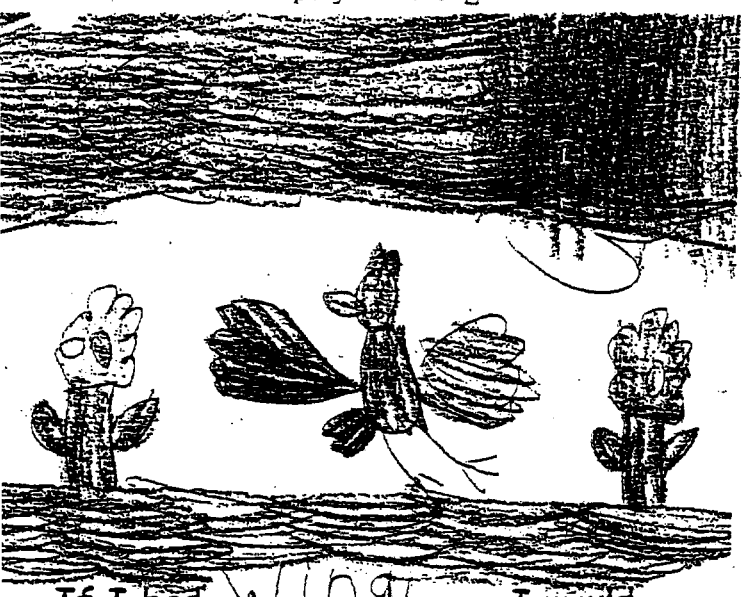
Writing:

Next it is the children's turn to write their on their own. Use the following idea as a prompt: "Imagine you could wake up tomorrow morning with a special animal feature, like how Imogene woke up with antlers. What would you want? Why? What could you do if you had it?" Distribute pages for the class book that read "If I had _____, I would. . ." Help students to come up with creative ideas to make their writing original and detailed.

Student Writing Samples
6+1 Writing Trait: Ideas
Imogene's Antlers

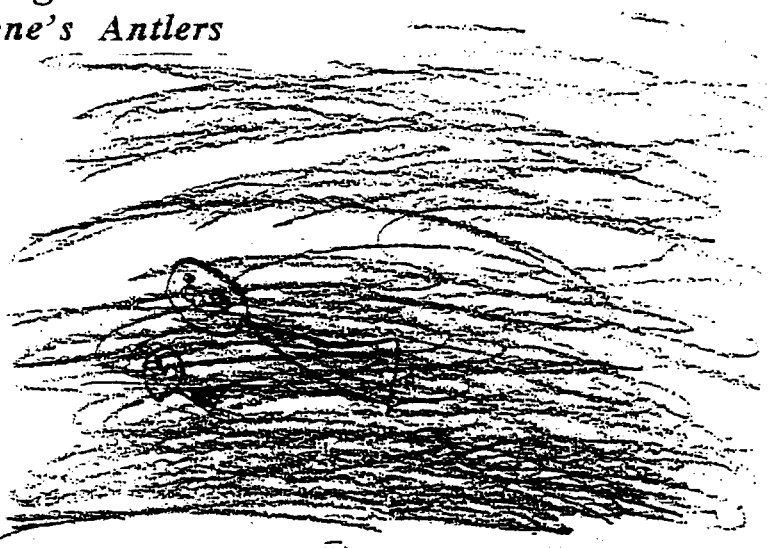
If I had paws, I would run to my Grandmas house I would play the best Game

Emergent Literacy Translation:
If I had paws, I would run to my grandma's house.
I would play the best game.



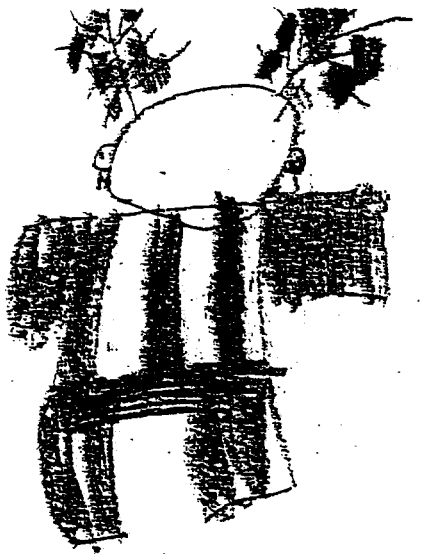
If I had wings, I would I would fling to my cizins My gramz My grat gramz

Emergent Literacy Translation:
If I had wings, I would fly to my cousin's,
my grandma's, and my great grandma's.



If I had SHP FOR EKER GDK I EFT FES

Emergent Literacy Translation:
If I had sharp teeth like a shark, I would eat fish.



If I had antlrs, I would hang tols on my antlrs and hang donas on My antlrs

Emergent Literacy Translation:
If I had antlers, I would hang tools on my antlers
and hang donuts on my antlers.

Response: *Imogene's Antlers*

I was pleasantly surprised with the outcome of this lesson. As I was teaching, I watched as students passed through each the stage of the "Readers Become Writers" cycle. Before reading the story, students were already excited to see why Imogene had antlers. When they found out what she did with them, they were eager to suggest other things they would do if they had antlers. Their excitement over reading a story with such an original idea, immediately sparked their desire to share new ideas. After modeling my new idea, students were ready to write on their own. There were several students who got right to work and needed only minimal assistance. Other students, however, struggled to read the words already on the page, which left them unsure what and where to write first. For these students, I guided them and supported their writing until they reached a point that they could be somewhat independent. All students felt proud when their writing was accomplished and added to a class book. Later that day, I saw several students reading *Imogene's Antlers* during their free time. I was ecstatic to see my students eagerly assuming their roles as readers and writers!

6+1 Writing Trait: Ideas

Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King

by Jean Marzollo

Prereading:

"Have you ever made a wish? Sometimes we wish for our dreams to come true when we see a falling star, throw a coin into a fountain, or even before we blow out the candles on our birthday cake. Have you done any of those things? What dream did you wish would come true? We all have our own special dreams. We probably have some dreams for ourselves and some dreams for everyone. Even grown-ups have dreams. In fact, one adult named Martin Luther King had a very important dream. As we read this story about his life, listen to find out what his dream was."

Reading:

As you read aloud with students, stop to discuss the issues in the story. Help students to relate these issues to their own lives. For example, when it talks about discrimination and segregated facilities, ask the students "How would you feel if you had to sit in the back of the bus? Is that fair?" Be sure to emphasize King's "I have a dream" speech when reading it.

Prewriting:

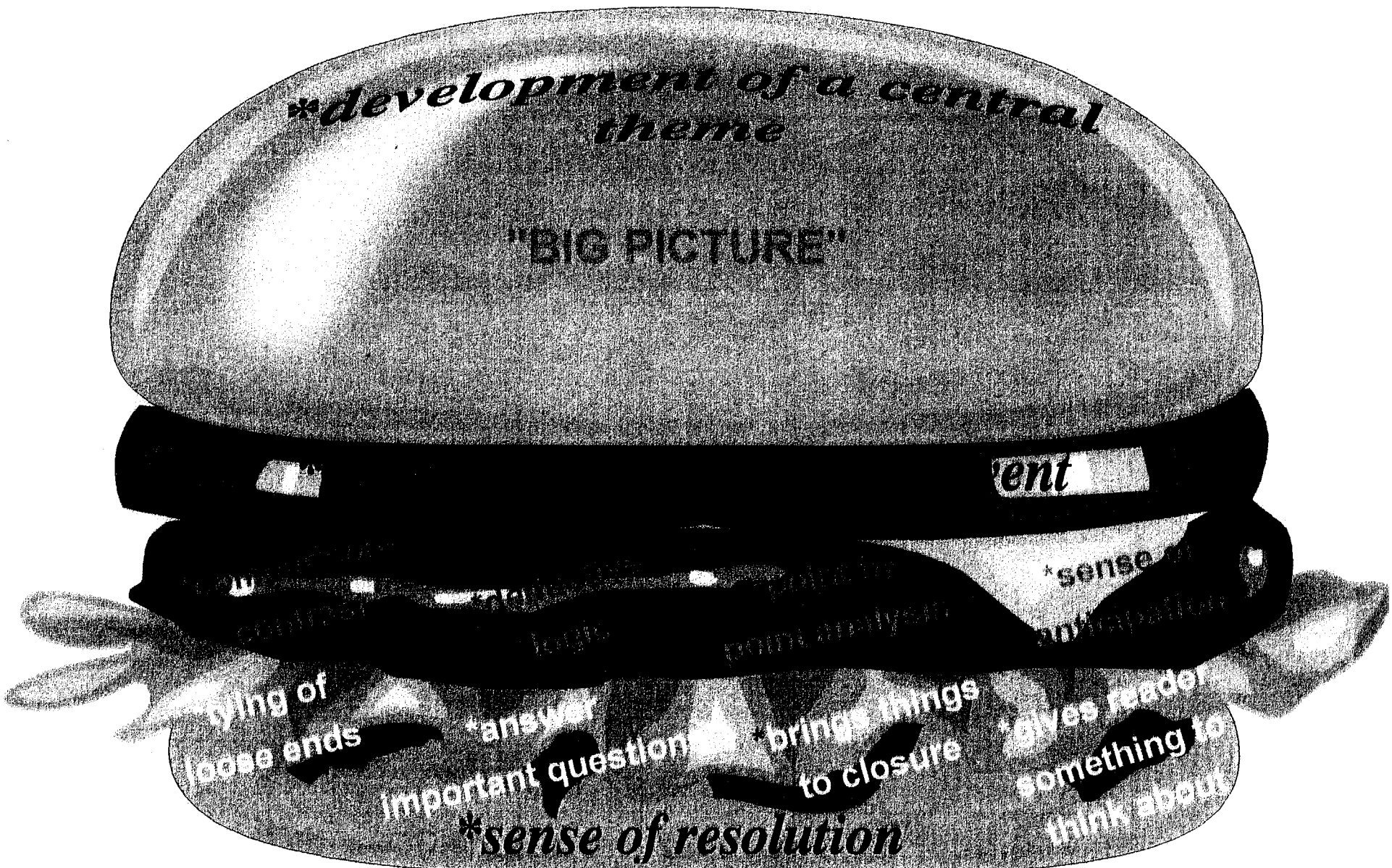
Use the following questions to prompt discussion: "What was Martin Luther King's dream? Why do you think he wanted that? Was his dream a personal dream? Who would benefit if his dream came true? How do you feel when someone has a dream for you? What are some other dreams that would benefit lots of people?" (Examples:

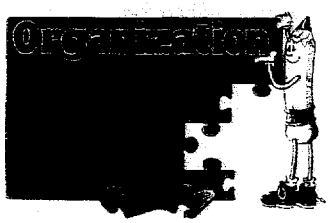
cures for illnesses, enough food for everyone, everyone has a home, take care of the planet, etc.) List many possibilities. They all don't have to be that general and vague. It could be a goal for the child's family, school, or state. (Examples: I dream of living closer to my grandma. I have a dream that our school will help people who are hungry.)

Writing:

Students should choose one dream that is important to them. Like Martin Luther King, their goals should be ways to make our school, country, or world better. Have students write their goal like Dr. King's, beginning with "I have a dream." Then encourage children to elaborate on their dream, explaining why it is so important to them. Also, students should brainstorm ways to make their dream come true. Students should write their final copy on a silhouette of Dr. King's head and the final pieces can be displayed on a bulletin board.

ORGANIZATION





6+1 Trait: Organization

A Busy Year *

By Leo Lionni

Prereading:

Ask students what their favorite season is. "Do they prefer winter, spring, summer, or fall? Why? What is you had to live outside in the same spot all year long. Which would you like better, then?" Tell them that a character in today's story is in this situation. "What might this character be? I'll give you a hint: it's not a person." Allow students to brainstorm ideas of what the character is and why it must stay in one place. Give clues as needed.

Reading:

Read the story aloud. Ask students to pay attention to the things that happen in each season. Include details about the weather, activities, and celebrations.

Prewriting:

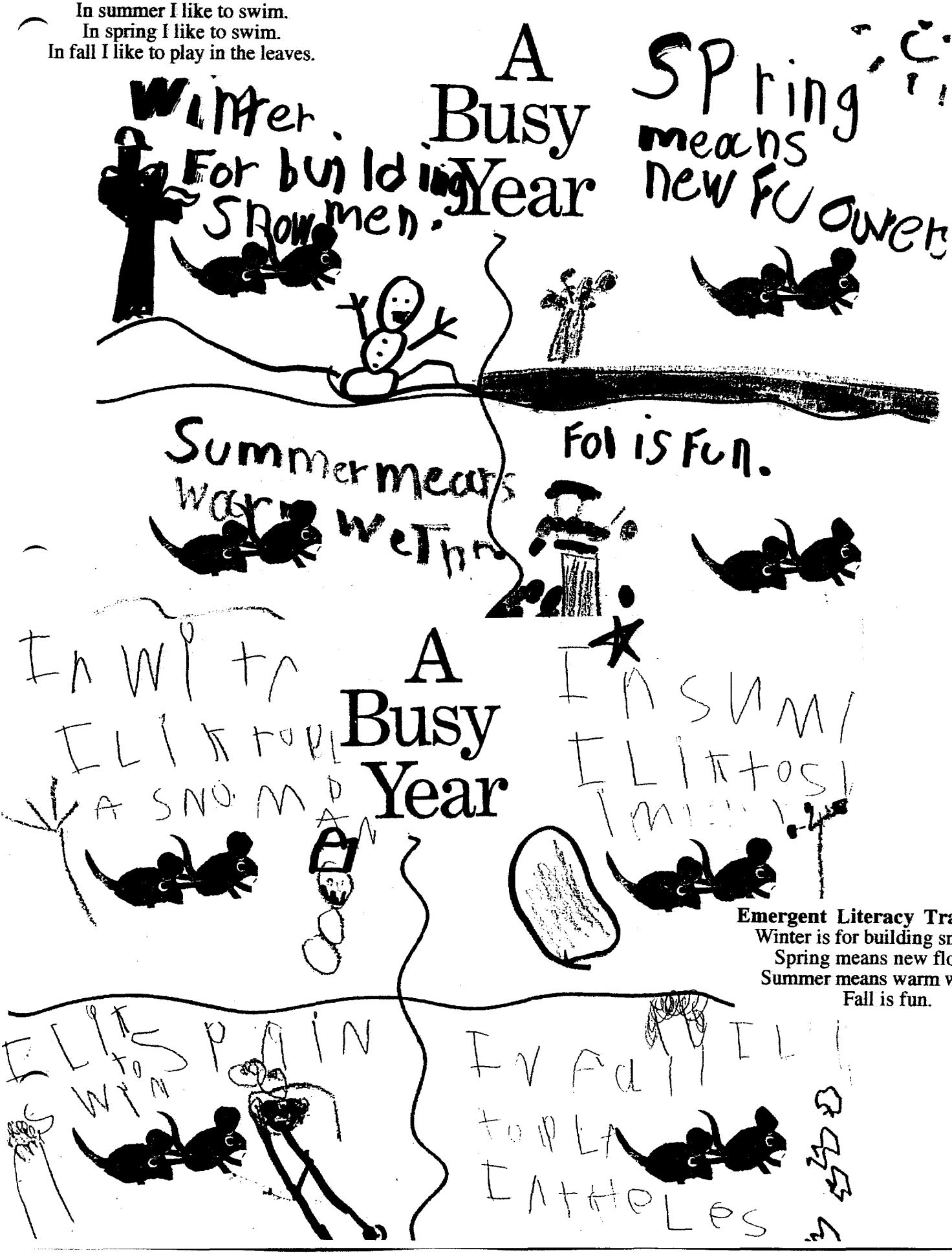
Discuss the various events that occurred in each season. "What makes each season special? What kinds of activities can you do during each season? What did the characters in the story do? How did they feel during each season?" Then show students the writing page. Explain that they write about one season in each of the boxes. They can write about what happened in the story, about the season itself, or about things they like to do during the season. The important thing, is that they follow a chronological order. That means, they must proceed in order from one season to the next, not jumping back and forth. Using time, is one way to organize our writing.

Writing:

Help students to write at least one complete sentence for each season. Focus on helping them think about one event and what comes directly after it, and so on. Provide a visual aid that shows the order of the seasons to assist students in organizing their ideas.

Student Writing Samples
6+1 Trait: Organization
A Busy Year

Emergent Literacy Translation:
In winter I like to build a snowman.
In summer I like to swim.
In spring I like to swim.
In fall I like to play in the leaves.



Emergent Literacy Translation
Winter is for building snowmen.
Spring means new flowers.
Summer means warm weather.
Fall is fun.

Response: *A Busy Year*

This lesson was rather different from most of my other lessons. In this activity, students had many choices about which to write, but simply must write about four different things: the seasons. A lot of students had a really difficult time with this lesson. Most of them wrote really superficial, simple sentences. Some struggled to even do that. I think it was difficult for them because the seasons are an abstract concept. It is a large time span, which makes it difficult for them to connect and sequence correctly. It might be easier to do this type of activity using days of the week, or something that is more routine for them.

If I were to teach this lesson again, I would use this activity as a prewriting activity. The final emphasis would be placed on writing a class collaboration about our busy year. This would be an end of the year activity. I would use photographs from various activities and events that we'd done throughout the year. Students would first look at all the pictures and then sort them according to the season in which they occur. This would help students realize how writers organize their thoughts before writing. Next, we would put the photos for each season in a special order. The final activity would be for each child to write a caption for one of the pictures. This would then become our class book about our busy year. I feel this activity would be much more motivational and effective for teaching the trait of organization.

6+1 Writing Trait: Organization

The Mitten

By Jan Brett

Prereading:

Tell your students to close their eyes and picture this scene as it is described. "It's a hot and sunny summer day. All the neighborhood kids are playing outside. Some are playing tag in the front yard, while others ride their bikes through the streets. You emerge from your front door, carefully licking a delicious green popsicle. Although you are standing right next to the kids playing tag, you make no attempt to join their game. You are to involved in eating your frozen delight. Then, your friend walks over, watching you savor each tasty lick of the popsicle. What do you think your friend said?" Discuss how the other kids would feel. Would they all want a popsicle, too? Gradually lead them to discover that if one person had one, another one would want one. Then another, and another, and another would want popsicles. Before long, everyone would want a popsicle!

In the story we are about to read, a similar trend occurs. Only this time, our setting is not summer, but winter. "Do you think our characters want a popsicle in the winter? What might they want? If it's not something to eat, what might they want? Think of things that might help keep them warm." Take suggestions. Inform students that this story is about the animals of the forest when they encounter a mitten. Show them the cover of the book and allow them to make predictions. "What do you think the animals will do when they encounter this mitten? Let's read and find out!" Remind

students to pay particular attention to the way the story is organized. What happens first? Second? Next?

Reading:

As you read the story, emphasize the logical sequence of events. Ask students to find the pattern of the animals that join the group in the mitten. What is the pattern? Why is it helpful to have the animals arrive in order according to their size? Does it make sense? Help them to see that this organization makes it easier for the reader to follow the sequence of the story.

Prewriting:

After reading the story, ask the students to do a group retelling. Draw a rough sketch to show each event as they retell it. Begin by drawing the mitten, and then add the animals to it in order. Allow students to make the decision about which animal they think comes next in the progression. After completing the brief retelling, ask them to explain how the author's pattern for introducing animal characters helped them retell the story? What if she introduced the characters in random order? Would it be as easy to remember? This organization is logical and makes sense to the reader. This makes it easier to understand and remember. We should always organize our writing in a way that makes it easy for our reader to understand.

Now we are all going to write our own stories similar to the one we just read. Begin by brainstorming possible settings for the story instead of a forest in winter. Sample settings: the beach, a rainforest, a jungle, the desert, the mountains, a garden, an amusement park, a shopping mall, a football stadium, the ocean floor, etc. Next, ask

students to choose item that would be found in each of these locations, like the mitten in the story. Examples: a shell at the beach, a scarecrow's pocket in a garden, an empty popcorn tub at a movie theater, or an empty shopping bag at the mall. Now, the final step is to select characters for the story. Students may choose to use animals, people, or a combination of the two. Encourage them to select characters that would be appropriate for their setting. Allow students to brainstorm on their own before the writing process begins. One whole day might be devoted to brainstorming.

Writing:

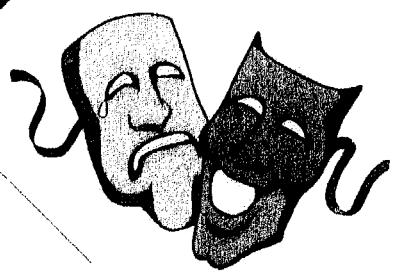
The following day, ask students to take their characters and organize them in a way that makes sense to the reader. Possible patterns include size, age, number (3 monkeys, 2 mice, 1 flea), alphabetical order, etc. Once students are organized, they should write and illustrate their own books. To keep illustrations simple, encourage students to draw only the new character on each page, allowing the reader to assume that all the other characters still remain inside their chosen object. After completing their books, students can share them in the author's chair. They should ask their readers/listeners to figure out the pattern by which their story is organized. This gives the perfect opportunity to discuss different organizational structures and their importance in writing.

VOICE

Unusual

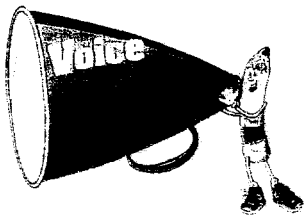
Sparkle

Playfulness
Liveliness



Emotion

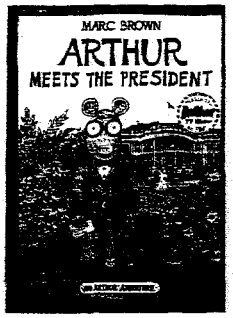
Personality
Individuality



6+1 Trait: Voice

Arthur Meets the President *

By Marc Brown



Prereading:

Begin a discussion using the following questions and statements: "Have you ever been excited and nervous at the same time? Why? I was excited and very nervous before my dance recital, when I had to dance a solo. I was really happy I had a solo, but also worried that I might mess up! Can you think of a time when you've felt that way, too?" Allow students to share similar experiences. Then explain that in our story, Arthur feels the same way about something really special that he gets to do. Allow students to guess what he might be nervous about. Then tell them the title of the book. Ask how the students would feel if they were going to meet the President.

Reading:

As the story is read aloud, ask the children to pay particular attention to the way Arthur feels. "How do the other characters in the story feel?" Point out clues in the pictures that give us an idea of Arthur's emotions. How does the author reveal Arthur's voice, personality, and feelings?"

Prewriting:

"Arthur got the opportunity to meet the President by writing an essay about how he helps make America great. What was his answer? How does Arthur make America great? How do you make America great? What do we do as a class? What does your family do?" Brainstorm ideas beginning with things that are great about America. Some

possible examples are: "We all respect one another. I am nice to others. I try my best at everything. I can vote to choose my leaders. I can run for a public office to help in our country's government."

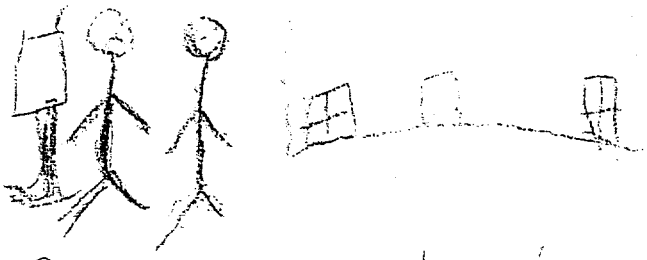
Begin a discussion about the diversity in the United States. Ask students if all of us are alike. Point out that our country is unique because we all are unique. Remind students that each one of them is special and important. They each contribute to making America the wonderful place it is. Tell them to write about something that is important and unique to them. Remind students that this is an opportunity to reveal their voice as an author. Their writing should give hints about their personality and beliefs.

Writing:

Distribute pages for the class book titled "We Make America Great!" Each child's paper should have a title at the top that says, "How I Can Help Make America Great." On the blank lines at the bottom of the page, students write about things they do or will do in the future to make our country great. Provide assistance for struggling students. Because this lesson is focusing on revealing the child's voice as a writer, it is appropriate to let a student dictate to an adult or tape recorder. Focus on the child's expression, not his or her ability to write. Be sure the words are coming directly from the child's thoughts and ideas.

Student Writing Samples
6+1 Trait: Voice
Arthur Meets the President

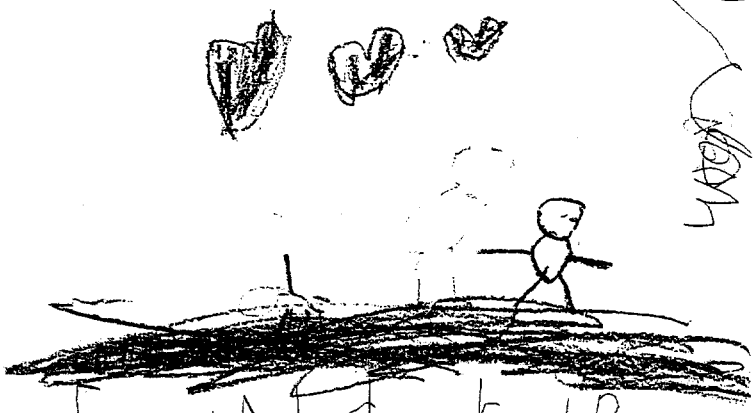
"How I Can Help Make America Great"



Brown and wit
pe Pl can shar
dreek ing Fautins
and re.Strot

Emergent Literacy Translation:
Brown and white people can share drinking fountains and restaurants.

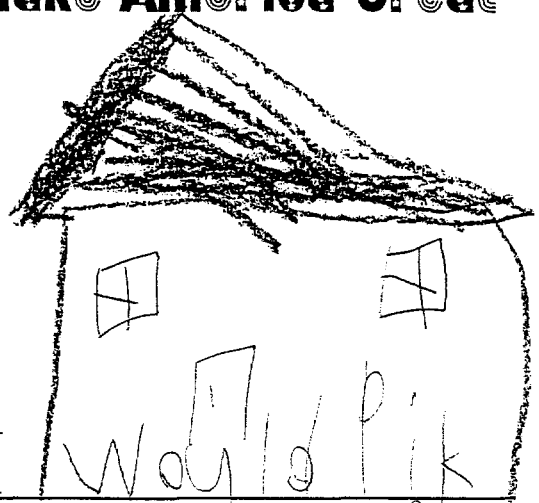
"How I Can Help Make America Great"



I wonT t help
Pe>Ple laying
on tne stet

Emergent Literacy Translation:
I would help people living on the street.

"How I Can Help Make America Great"



I Would Pik
up ch-rash and Plat
Flower help People
Shovl ther ariva

Emergent Literacy Translation:
I would pick up trash and plant flowers.
Help people shovel their driveway.

"How I Can Help Make America Great"

I Wod Love WoUN
hs R.

Emergent Literacy Translation:
I would love one another.

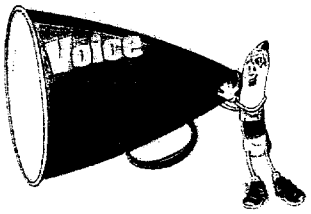
Response: *Arthur Meets the President*

As part of our study on Presidents and the United States, students were eager to read an Arthur story that related to our unit. As one of the children's favorite literary characters, I chose to use Arthur as a vehicle for expressing the importance of voice. All students were familiar with Arthur books, and therefore knew about his character. They knew to look at the pictures and listen for his words to discover how he was feeling. During the read aloud, students keyed in to Arthur's voice without much prompting.

The discussion that followed reading was especially valuable. For kindergartners, my students showed a tremendous amount of insight. They all were very honest and thoughtful in their answers. When asked what they do to make America great, they responded with a wide variety of answers. Many centered around the idea in Arthur's speech about being nice. Other students talked about sharing and giving to those who are in need. Some students even commented on the equality of races and appreciation of diversity in their own simple words. Of course, we also had very concrete responses including helping with household chores and simple tasks. Regardless of the child's answer, all of them revealed a part of their personality, their voice, through their writing.

Students' motivation was high throughout this entire lesson. They enjoyed listening to Arthur and discussing the ideas the author presents. All the students wanted to share ways that they make America great and were eager to write. Some students really needed assistance putting their thoughts on paper. With scaffolding and support, their confidence grew and their writing improved. After completing the class book, students were eager to share with one another. While each student read his or her page of

the book, the rest of the class was surprisingly interested to hear their writing. I feel this activity really helped promote our caring environment in our class and fostered respect for one another as people, and as authors. The next day, one student told me that his mom read him the book again before bed. He said he really liked it and was going to get another Arthur book next time we went to the library. This was proof that his appreciation for literature had grown, as well as his desire to write.



6+1 Writing Trait: Voice

Today I feel Silly! & Other Moods That Make My Day

by Jamie Lee Curtis

Prereading:

Play a quick game of charades. On small strips of paper, write an emotion. Let several students pick an emotion from the hat and try to portray it for the rest of the class to guess. Discuss why someone who was angry pretended to hit things. Ask students how their emotions affect their day. Explain that the next book is all about a little girl and how she feels each day. Tell students to pay attention to all her different feelings and what she does when she feels certain ways.

Reading:

Read aloud using facial and vocal expression. Try to show the mood that the author is expressing in posture, pitch, tone, and eye contact. It might be a good opportunity to have students look at the pictures before reading the words. Have them predict what emotion she is feeling that day before you read the text. Cue them into the picture clues that give it away including her expression and body language, as well as the illustrator's choice of color and lines.

Prewriting:

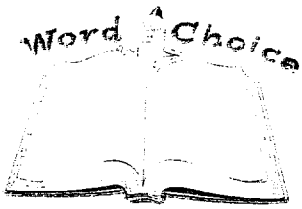
Begin a discussion using the following prompt: "Our moods are constantly changing, just like the girl's in the story. Sometimes we feel silly, happy, angry, or sad. What are some other emotions from the story?" Begin brainstorming a list of various emotions. Attempt to solicit strong, powerful words from students instead of routine,

overused adjectives. Next, ask students, "How do you feel today? Are you grumpy and mean? Silly and excited? Write about how you feel." Tell students to look carefully at the list to choose an emotion that best describes them today.

Writing:

Tell students that they are going to make their own book about how they feel. They will choose a different emotion each day. (By the end of the week, they will have a complete book.) Distribute individual books to each student. After they've chosen their emotion, remind them to use descriptive words (adjectives) and answer some of the following questions: "How do you feel today? Why do you feel this way? What do you want to do today? What do you have to do today?"

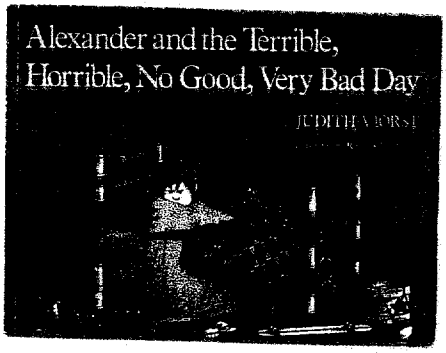
WORD CHOICE
Strong Word Choice
Rich Language
Precise Language
Expands Language
Property of a Prairie Vista Student



6+1 Writing Trait: Word Choice

***Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* ***

by Judith Viorst



Prereading:

Before reading, choose students to read the sentences written on the board:

1) I'm having a bad day.
2) I'm having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

Ask students to vote which sentence they like best. Choose a student to explain. "What is different about the second sentence that makes it more appealing to the reader." Explain that it contains more detail about the kind of day it was and about the narrator (the person who is saying it.) Tell students that Judith Viorst, the author of the next book, uses the choice of words to interest her reader. Listen for places in the story that reveal her unique style of writing. Why do you think she chose to write this way.

Reading:

Read the story, much like Alexander would as he told the story to his friend. Tone, inflection, and facial expressions would really add to the overall experience. Be sure to stress the areas when the author lists off lots of different adjectives.

Prewriting:

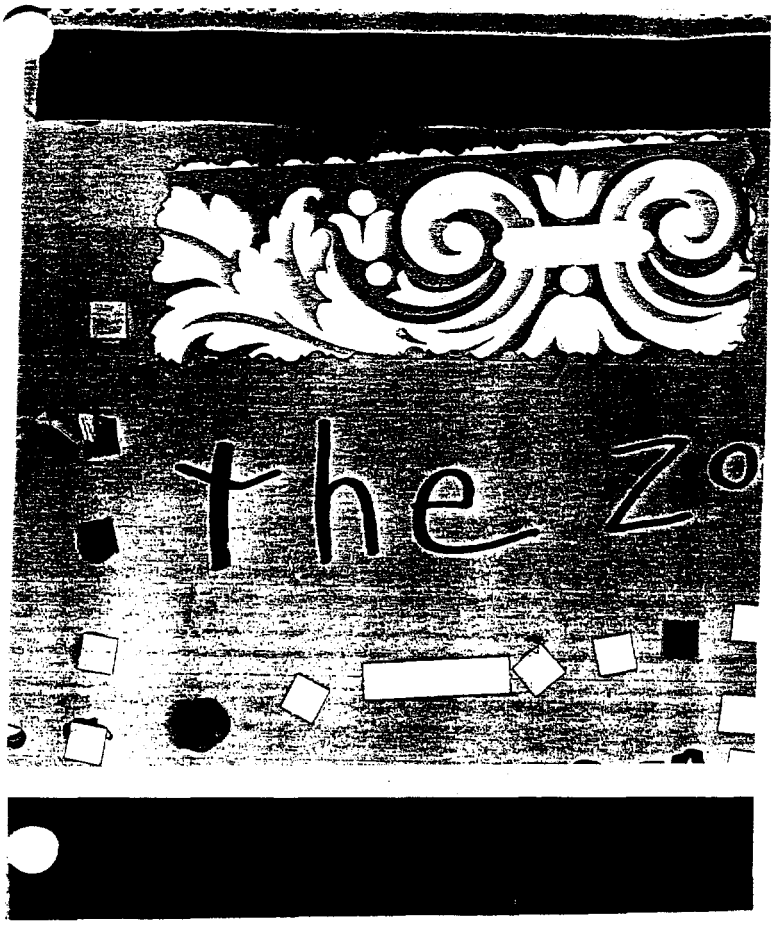
After reading the story, discuss the author's choice of words. Use the following questions: "Did she use fancy words? What was her style for writing? Why do you think she wrote in this manner?

Writing:

Like Alexander, we all have good and bad days. Think of a day that you remember really well. You may choose to write about a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day like Alexander. On the other hand, you may want to write about a really wonderful and happy day. Tell about your day in a story like Alexander's. Your story should include lots of describing words (adjectives). You also might want to include answers to the following questions: "What happened on this memorable day? Who was there? How did you feel? Where did you go?

You should choose words that reveal your view about this day. Don't use big fancy words that you don't understand. Use words that you would use if you were telling your best friend about your day. Choose exciting, action words, but make sure they tell your reader about who you are as a person.

Student Writing Samples
6+1 Writing Trait: Word Choice
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day



1

One Sune
Day my
Famle Went
to the Zoo
We Saw
Zebras and
Monkes my
FaFrit wos the

2

Worthog
Hen We Wit
hom it Wos
a vare good
day. The End

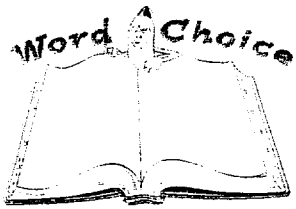
3

Emergent Literacy Translation:
One sunny day, my family went to the zoo.
We saw zebras and monkeys. My Favorite was the warthog. Then we went home.
It was a very good day. The End

Response: ***Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day***

There were many good things about this lesson. First of all, this story is a favorite for many students in my class. This immediately excited them to hear that we were reading this book. When students heard that they were going to write like Judith Viorst, they were ready to start writing. Because students were familiar with and really enjoyed the author of the story, they, too, wanted to write like her. This shows that natural connection between sharing literature models and creating motivation.

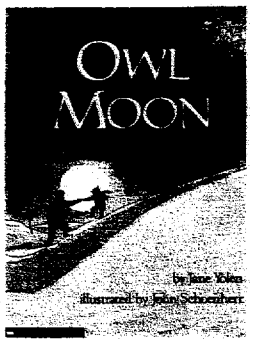
Students were eager to write about a good or bad day they have experienced. They did a nice job revealing their own feelings and memories of the day. Although this lesson was designed to stress word choice, it actually was more effective in teaching students to write with voice. Both of the authors whose samples are included, did an excellent job of writing to reveal their own styles and personalities. Students did pick fairly interesting words, however, this was not the noticeable success in this lesson.



6+1 Writing Trait: Word Choice

Owl Moon

By Jane Yolen



Prereading:

Select 5 student volunteers. Give one student a cookie. Give each of the other students a card with the following sentences on them:

1) "I'm hungry."
2) "I'm starving!"
3) "I'm as hungry as a bear after hibernating all winter!"
4) "My stomach is as empty as the Grand Canyon!"

Tell students that the student with the cookie will decide who gets the cookie based on who seems the hungriest. Ask each student to read the sentence on his/her card. After all sentences have been read, allow the judge to choose who gets the cookie and why. Lead a brief discussion about the importance of choosing good words to express your feelings. Although all of those sentences imply that the person is hungry, some do a better job than others. Because students 3 and 4 used strong, powerful words, they were more likely to get a cookie.

Explain that the author of the book you are about to read chose the words in her story very carefully. Listen for a part in the story where the author's strong words really help you picture the details in your mind. Choose your favorite word, phrase, or sentence from the story to share at the end. Be sure you can explain why the phrase is your favorite.

Reading:

Read the story, emphasizing the dramatic, detailed language Yolen uses. Students may each have a post it note. When they hear their favorite phrase, they can write the phrase, beginning word, or page number down to help them remember it. After sharing some favorite phrases, explain the concepts of similes and metaphors. Then, read the story again. This time, students should listen for similes or metaphors and raise their hand when they hear one read aloud.

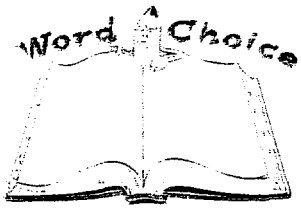
Prewriting:

Begin a discussion using the following questions: "Do you think the little girl enjoyed going owling? Why? What made it special? Who was she with? Do you think that's why she enjoyed it so much?" Use the following idea to brainstorm ideas for writing: "Think of something that you like to do with your parents. Choose something that is really special and doesn't happen all of the time. Possible examples include planting flowers with mom, mowing the lawn with dad, shopping, golfing, amusement parks, vacations, etc." Next, brainstorm a list of good descriptive words to use in the writing.

Writing:

Give students materials to make their own small book. Possible titles for the book include, "A Day With Dad," or " Me and My Mom." Encourage students to use at least 10 powerful words or descriptions in their writing. Help them to use a thesaurus if necessary. Once the writing is complete, allow them to illustrate the books. When the book is finished, it can be taken home as a gift for Mother's Day or Father's Day. If this

is at the beginning of the year, the books could be displayed in the classroom for parents to see at Open House.



6+1 Trait: Word Choice

Why the Banana Split?

By Rick Walton

Prereading:

Brainstorm different ways we talk about leaving. Start by giving examples such as "Everyone *get out* of the coat room." "All students *leave* your seats." Try to solicit expressions that students might know: hit the road, head out, move out, split, roll, etc.

Then focus students on action words that describe how they are leaving. Sample words: run, skip, walk, crawl, jump, hop, slither, slide, glide, gallop, tip-toe, etc. Discuss that these words are all verbs. They are specific action verbs that don't just tell what they did, but also give more detail to how they are doing it. Ask students to demonstrate how differently they would move if I said "*Stomp* out of the coat room" instead of just "*Walk* out of the coat room." Explain that as we read this story, you want them to focus on the author's choice of words for each page. Try to remember your favorite sentence or phrase.

Reading:

While reading, point out the unique play on words. On the first action page, ask why it's appropriate for the jump ropes to "skip town." Discuss the importance of the illustrations. Ask students, "If we just read the sentence without the picture, would we necessarily see the same thing?" The illustrations help us to visualize the author's play on words.

Prewriting:

Brainstorm other ideas for writing. Instead of leaving, perhaps students could brainstorm ideas for hurrying to get somewhere. Where might people be in a hurry to go? Possible ideas: to get in line for a rollercoaster, to get in line to get tickets for concert/movie/sporting event, contest, bathroom, etc.

Now brainstorm possible verbs or phrases that describe how someone or something might move in a hurry to get somewhere. Remember, this can include, not only getting to the place, but trying to fit into it. Sample words: raced, catapulted, swung from limb to limb, squeezed in, packed in, herded in, piled in, squished, smooshed, etc. Next, ask students to go back and think of good nouns to go with these verbs. For example, "The sardines packed in." "The cement poured in."

Writing:

As a class, choose a scenario which makes the best setting for a story. Then, elaborate enough to create a few pages to set up the plot. Refer to the beginning of the story for assistance.

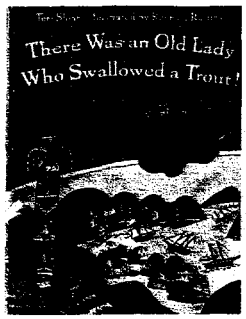
Then allow students to write the remaining pages on their own. It may be beneficial to allow students to work in pairs, in order to facilitate more brainstorming and discussion about choosing the right word. Ask students to compile a list of three different possibilities. This way, we can make sure that each page in the book is unique. Students should indicate their favorite of the three as their first choice for inclusion in the book. When all pages are written and illustrated, they can be compiled to create a class book.

Poetry
Musical
Lyrical
short

6+1 Trait: Sentence Fluency

There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed a Trout *

By Terri Sloat



Prereading:

Before reading, have students try to answer riddles by providing a rhyming word. After solving the riddle, ask students to name other words that rhyme. List as many rhyming words as possible. Explain that now we are going to read a story that has lots of rhymes in it. Tell them to listen carefully for their favorite rhyme because we'll share them at the end of the story.

Reading:

Read the story aloud, placing additional emphasis on the rhyming phrases. As the book progresses, begin leaving off the end of the rhyming phrase, allowing the students to fill in the appropriate word. Because of the book's repetitive, patterned nature, students should be encouraged to guess the rhyming phrases as the book is read.

Prewriting:

Ask students to share their favorite rhymes from the book. For example, "There was an old lady who swallowed a seal. She let out a squeal when she swallowed the seal." Discuss how the rhyming adds to the flow of the story. Read some of the selected rhymes to model the nice sound. When writers use a distinct rhythm, it makes it much easier for the reader to read fluently.

Next, ask students to list a bunch of animals that an old lady might swallow. Tell students to think of animals from a different setting, like the jungle. After compiling a list

of animals, ask students to come up with rhyming words for the animals. Then, as a class, develop some sentences that use rhyme and rhythm to create fluent, smoothly flowing sentences.

Writing:

After students have an idea about an animal and a rhyming word, distribute the page for the class book. Read the words on the page with the students so they know what words are already on the page and what words they need to write. Provide needed support as students write. When they are done, put the pages into the class book. Share the book with the class, letting each child read his/her page.